

BWC Strategy Session

Marketing to FORTUNE 500 Companies

On May 5, 2005, Best Workplaces for CommutersSM (BWC) continued its 2005 Strategy Session series to provide BWC Network members with tips and resources for marketing the BWC list to FORTUNE 500 companies in their region. Patrice Thornton, BWC team member, provided opening administrative remarks and introduced the featured participants:

Steve Offutt, BWC team member and
FORTUNE 500 campaign manager

Nicole Waldman, air quality planner, Houston-
Galveston Area Council of Governments

Marketing Toolkit

Mr. Offutt discussed the materials in the FORTUNE 500 Campaign Marketing Toolkit, which was provided to all registered attendees before the call. Ms. Waldman provided real-life examples and described her experience recruiting for the 2004 list of Best Workplaces for CommutersSM from the FORTUNE 500 companies. To download the FORTUNE 500 Campaign Marketing Toolkit, please visit the BWC Web site at <<http://www.bwc.gov/suppor/network-f500.htm>>. Network members interested in discussing specific strategies or ideas about how to maximize the tool kit materials and the FORTUNE 500 campaign should contact Susan Bullard at 202-343-9856.

Lessons Learned

Ms. Waldman described her experience recruiting for BWC in 2004. She suggested the following tactics for a successful recruiting effort:

- Review the full list of FORTUNE 500 compa-

nies and identify those with work sites in the campaign area.

- Be persistent. Recruiters often need to make more than one call and attempt to reach multiple contacts.
- Emphasize the opportunity for positive press. Ms. Waldman described a situation in which she had tried repeatedly to recruit a large work site in the Houston area. After many unsuccessful attempts, she contacted the corporate headquarters and spoke with a contact in public relations. The contact signed up the work site shortly thereafter and was very excited about the free, positive press.
- Describe the benefits of the Top 20 list. Ms. Waldman received a call from a FORTUNE 500 work site interested in maintaining its spot in the Top 20. Ms. Waldman explained that to keep the spot, the company needed to sign up additional work sites or expand its benefit program to other regions of the country.

Open Discussion

- Alisa Mattison Price from the Downtown Minneapolis TMO asked if many FORTUNE 500 companies attempt to qualify their entire corporations (i.e., all their U.S. work sites). Mr. Offutt explained that this is very rare. Most large, multi-site companies have commute programs that vary by specific geographic location.
- A participant asked how the BWC team determined which work sites to highlight in the media coverage. Mr. Offutt explained that EPA did not highlight specific work sites. Instead, the

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team focused on promoting all employers finishing in the Top 20. The press offices at the Top 20 companies were notified about the opportunity for positive coverage and some worked with EPA to pitch their own stories.

- Mark Evanoff from AlterNetRides.com works with regional transit agencies and private corporations to provide online rideshare matching services. Mr. Offutt and Mr. Evanoff agreed to speak again later to discuss recruiting opportunities.
- Rosaria Ippolito from Meadowlink asked when the BWC team plans to send the recruiting letters from the EPA Administrator's office. Mr. Offutt explained that the BWC team scheduled the letters to be delivered the week of May 16. Mr. Offutt agreed to notify the participants when the Administrator's office actually completes the process.
- C.J. McLaughlin from Turner Broadcasting System asked if the list of Best Workplaces for CommutersSM from the FORTUNE 500 Companies is promoted through ACT. Mr. Offutt explained that the BWC team is asking the ACT to send letters to its members who work at FORTUNE 500 companies.
- Ms. Price asked if approaching small, satellite offices of FORTUNE 500 companies in a recruiter's local area is a useful way to start. Mr.

Offutt answered that this is a good strategy because it provides leverage for contacting larger work sites in the future. In general, recruiting large companies takes more time since more levels of approval are needed.

- Ms. Thornton briefly described the Race to Excellence, a way for the BWC team to recognize supporters who are promoting BWC in local regions. She pointed out that Network members who participate in recruiting or brand-building activities are encouraged to participate in the Race to Excellence and may qualify for recognition opportunities at the ACT International Conference in Anaheim, California.

Closing

Ms. Thornton closed the discussion and informed the participants that a summary of the strategy session will be available on the BWC Web site at <www.bwc.gov/suppor/seminars.htm>.

Ms. Thornton also encouraged everyone to join the BWC Network and take advantage of the tools and resources that are available to Network members.